

River Edge Redevelopment Zone Program 2008 Annual Report

The River Edge Redevelopment Zone is an innovative pilot program designed to help revitalize riverfront areas by providing local developers and businesses with the critical tools to revive and redevelop abandoned or contaminated properties that will stimulate economic development opportunities and create more Illinois jobs. The River Edge Redevelopment Initiative includes the designation of redevelopment zones that are eligible to receive tax credits, exemptions and new grant funding to support clean-up, remediation and redevelopment efforts that will lead to economic revitalization in these areas. This initiative combines resources across state agencies and is administered primarily by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA).

Implementation Status

DCEO has designated zones in the cities of Aurora, East St. Louis, and Rockford.

Aurora Zone

The City of Aurora River Edge Redevelopment Zone consists of former industrial land lining its east and west riverfronts that have tremendous economic development potential, but the costs of redevelopment have made attracting investment extremely difficult.

East St. Louis Zone

The City of East St. Louis River Edge Redevelopment Zone is adjacent to the Mississippi River and consists of approximately 2.5 acres. The East St. Louis Riverfront is a unique area because of its unparalleled location directly across the river from the Gateway Arch.

Rockford Zone

In Rockford, River Edge will allow for multiple redevelopments using abandoned industrial sites along the Rock River, creating both recreational and residential development spaces.

Effectiveness

During Fiscal Year 2008, according to reports submitted by these three zones, investments of more than \$27.2 million in these designated zones will result in the projected creation and retention of 220 jobs. Although other factors are undoubtedly involved, RERZ designation is a highly important determinant of a business's decision to locate or expand. While it is too early to fully evaluate the impact of this new program, we believe that the River Edge Redevelopment Program will become one of the state's most successful economic development tools.

Proposed New Legislation

DCEO is not proposing any new legislation at this time.